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ABSTRACT

The development of public relations follows when economic development and democracy thrive. EC 1992, with its plans for the European Common Market Community, is a public relations opportunity for U.S. public relations firms. In a survey of 31 firms, 6 owned or were owned by networks, 17 had membership in a network, 8 had no public relations network, and two-thirds indicated that EC 1992 was a great opportunity. In addition to network membership, firms are increasing personnel and opening offices with expansion spilling over into the Scandinavian and Eastern Block. The four most frequently mentioned qualifications for the personnel involved in EC 1992 were international relations/culture, business experience, public relations, and language. The second highest group of qualifications included good communication, media relations, and writing skills. Academic background most expected would be business, liberal arts (communication is placed in this category), and journalism. However, concerns were expressed about public relations professionals being trained as "craftsmen" and later having to be trained to "think" on the job. In Europe, the opposite is true, and executives suggested that this latter sequence was preferred. These findings have a number of implications for public relations curriculum development in U.S. colleges and universities. (Eight tables of data are included, and the survey is attached.) (Author/SR)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS TO MEET THE NEW EUROPEAN MARKET

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ABSTRACT

Public relations follows when economic development and democracy thrives. EC 1992 in Europe is a public relations opportunity for U.S. public relations firms. In a survey of 31 firms, those owning or owned by networks (6), those having membership in a network (17), and those with no public relations network (8), two-thirds indicated EC 1992 was a great opportunity. In addition to network membership, firms are increasing personnel and opening offices with expansion spilling over into the Scandinavian and Eastern Block.

The four most frequently mentioned qualifications for the personnel involved in EC 1992 were international relations-culture (14 mentions), business experience (14 mentions), public relations (12 mentions), and language (12 mentions). The second highest group of qualifications included good communication (8 mentions), media relations (7 mentions), and writing skills (6 mentions). Academic background most expected would be business, liberal arts (communication placed here), and journalism. However, concerns were expressed about public relations professionals being trained as "craftsmen" and later had to be trained to "think" on the job. In Europe, the opposite is true and executives were suggesting this latter sequence was preferred. These findings have a number of implications for public relations curriculum development in our colleges and universities.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

TO MEET THE NEW EUROPEAN MARKET

"If economics can be seen as the warp of world togetherness, then communications is the woof". (Fiur, 1988) The author of this quote was referring to computers, satellites, microwaves, cable TV as communications. In this presentation, communications will be redefined not as the channel or means of communication but the communication process itself. In fact, substituting public relations for communications as a process is the essence of the direction of this research.

Economics then as the warp of the world togetherness is equally matched by communications as the woof. Communications is more broadly defined than journalism to include the entire spectrum of communication: interpersonal, public communication, organizational communication, visual communication, broadcasting as well as print. And public relations professionals use all of these approaches to conduct the business of public relations.

If the EC single market was born out of sheer necessity, then public relations is waiting in the wings to assist in the birthing. The attitude is best expressed by a French citizen:

"My grandfather was local, my father was national, and I have to become European...it is no longer true that you can remain local and survive" -Antonie Riboud
--Chairman, BSN (French mfg. company)

As Peter Osgood, Vice Chairman of Hill and Knowlton, INc. succinctly states in an address before the Indiana Public Relations Conference on April 6, 1989, public relations flourishes where the following conditions exist:

There's a free market economy
There's a free press
There's a democratic form of government
And, the society is pluralistic--not driven by a single ideology

So the conditions of a "one market" in Europe has brought about increased opportunities for public relations. Osgood summarizes the PR attitude as: "act locally and think globally." (Osgood, 1989)

Thus, the relationship between the EC "one market" and public relations is the warf and woof of the fabric of development.

Both business and public relations are pressured into thinking "globally" in this situation. To more exactly measure this relationship, four specific areas are explored:

1. The attitude of public relations firms toward the EC "one market" development,

2. The role of global networks in furthering public relations outreach,

3. The qualifications and academic background public relations firms seek for international public relations employees, and

4. The type of public relations evolving to meet the needs for developing the EC--"one market" concept.

Methodology

In 1987 there was a tremendous exodus of public relations professionals from corporate communications to public relations firms. Corporations were cutting overhead and hiring an outside firm for public relations, a more cost-effective strategy. Overhead, employee benefits, etc. were reduced or eliminated by this approach. In the Chicago area, alone, nearly 143,000 public relations consultants/specialists moved to independent public relations firms (Kleiman, 1987). Most likely the public relations firms serve as a primary link between the U.S. corporations and EC.

To learn directly about how public relations agencies were, in fact, approaching 1992, a survey was developed in the Fall of 1989. The survey, containing nine questions, was mailed to 200 randomly selected public relations firms listed in the 1989 edition of edition of O'Dwyers Directory of Public Relations Firms. Additional agencies in Boston and Chicago were contacted via telephone and fax. In Chicago, Crain's Chicago Business a published public relations directory was used for 13 additional interviews. A total of 31 agencies responded to the survey instruments with one academic, Bernays, interviewed for his academic perspective. Bernays responses are not generally included in the total responses but included in the narrative to provide orientation to the issues.

The telephone interviews admittedly resulted in more extensive responses and both interviewers were very pleased with the positive support and interest for the study. In most cases, the chief CEO or Vice President in charge of international relations responded to the questionnaire. Therefore, the respondents were essentially those who had the authority and the most up-to-date information on EC. The small sample of 31 firms will not allow major generalizations to all firms in the United States, however, but the results do identify various attitudes toward EC and the specific interpretation of the public relations approach needed for working in this economic arena.

Therefore, the survey focused not only on philosophy but specifics. The questions probed:

(1) the agency's overall feeling about 1992 as a business opportunity.
(2) agency plans to capitalize on the European Single Market, as it is called, via new offices,
(3) any rationale if the agency has no plans,
(4) agency plans to add or reassign existing staff to E.C. locations,
(5) qualifications, such as international relations or public relations experience, sought in new staff practitioners,
(6) academic backgrounds, such as business or communication, the agency prefers new E.C. staff to have,
(7) whether the agency belongs to or intends to join, one of the global communication networks such as Pinnacle or World-Comm,
(8) special services, if any which the agency expects to offer (such as investor relations, issues management, high tech or healthcare communications),
(9) any other, open-ended remarks

PART I: Public Relations Firms Plans for EC 1992

The 31 public relations firms responding to the survey fell into three primary groups: 1) owned by or owner of global PR networks, 2) members of a network (single or multiple), or 3) no alliances or membership in a public relations network. As Table I indicates below, the "opportunity" mirrors the degree of involvement in a network.

Table I
Opportunity for Firm
(31 Firms Responding)

	Great Opportunity	Modest Opport	Minimal Opport
Owned by or own network	6	0	0
Network Membership	13	3	1
No Network Membership	2	1	5
Total:	21	4	6

Two-thirds or 21 out of 31 firms view the 1992 EC developments as a great opportunity. This was echoed by Bernays the father of public relations who stated: "It is the ultimate opportunity. People power can change anything and this power results from democracy." Obviously more than economic opportunities are being referred to in this statement and the positive political climate which is opening up other countries provides an additional impetus to the situation.

Those firms seeing a great opportunity generally focus on both increased foreign and U.S. business. The one firm not linked with any network is fighting for visibility. Noting that the big networks have an "image", this independent firm is scanning and monitoring the environment for opportunities and culti-

vating these relationships aggressively. Having strong systems for monitoring the environment, this independent firm is not seeking network membership and feel they can best handle the opportunities themselves.

Those firms viewing EC 1992 as a modest opportunity are not owners or owned by major public relations networks. Three firms have a network link and another is not involved. Those who have a network link note that EC 1992 is an opportunity for some of their clients.

Those who view EC as a minimal opportunity generally have no membership link. One firm identifies only local real estate as their focus, another notes the increased competition and is pulling back from Europe, and one firm confirms that international concerns are not a growth area in public relations for them. One firm representative flatly stated: "There is too much expectation--EC 1992 will be a flop--there will not be the growth expected--too many barriers--it will take a long time, and there will be negative results such as inflation and recessions."

Plans

With two-thirds of the respondents seeing "great" opportunities for public relations in 1992, the plans for this event seems well underway. Only 5 firms have no plans.
Most are already in a network and 5 firms are waiting to capitalize on events here or abroad. Two will open their own firm in Europe. Two firms are adding staff. Three are entering joint ventures with foreign public relations firms.

What was established in this study correlated with the findings of an earlier news article. Writing in the New York Times in November 1989, Claudia Deutsch, who generally covers management stories for that newspaper, interviewed more than a dozen agencies, including the major ones, and created a four-fold strategic taxonomy as follows, to indicate the universe of PR agency strategies:

1. Open agency's own offices, staffing with local people; the strategy of Burson Marstellar.
2. Acquire local agencies, leaving them untouched; the strategy of Shandwick, Inc. in acquiring the U.S. and Canadian firms of Golin and Harris.
3. Take equity positions in agencies in other countries; the strategy of MSL Worldwide.
4. Join international networks of independent agencies; the strategies of Padilla Speer Beardsley.

The strategies of the 31 firms are outlined in Table II below.

Table II
PR Plans for 1992 EC
(firm may have more than one response)

Open Agency in Europe	2
Respond with additional staff in present offices	2
Join an international public relations network	1
Other: Expand international PR network	1

Other:	Represent foreign firms in US	2
Other:	Joint venture with European firm	3
Other:	Already in network	8
Other:	Capitalize on events here or there	5
Other:	Increase services	1
No plans		5
* Bernays:	University education	1

Those having no plans offered a number of reasons. These reasons scattered across a number of areas, most reasons were unique to the firm and one firm noted other trade agreements of greater importance than EC, i.e., Canada and the U.S. Their reasons are outlined in the table below:

Table III
No Plans*

Principle planning on retiring next year	1
Modest sized agency--most clients not international	2
Minimal opportunity especially compared with the possibilities of free-trade with Canada	1
Never interested, only local	1

*Note often the Chicago firms would refer interviews to parent firms in New York, Washington D.C., or San Francisco for the international contact.

The degree to which the increased opportunities for public relations translated into more offices and more professional positions is both a U.S. and a European phenomenon. Note data on established and new offices outlined in Table IV and Table V below.

Table IV
Established Offices

Office	More/Reassigned Staff
Have offices	None
New York	5
Minneapolis	5
London	No New staff
London	Reassigned
Assoc. in Britain	NA
Copenhagen	Reassigned
Brussels	Reassigned
Brussels	reorganized-no numbers
Switzerland	1 New Staff
Greece	1 working with affiliate
China	temporarily reassigned
Mexico	tempor reassign with affiliate
Vienna	grew 10 members
Munich	brought existing staff
East Europe	considering
Hungary	partner had staff in place
Moscow (1 year)	small only 20

Already in Italy, Greece, UK, France and now Spain, Portugal, Scandinavia

Table V
New Offices

Location	Staff additions
London	NA*
Joint venture	NA
Paris	NA
Poland	NA
Scotland	NA
Maybe open two but not Eastern Europe	
Europe	adding new Pinnacle Offices

*Not answered

Office expansion and the establishment of new offices is not limited to Europe. As one public relations firm representative stated: "Europe is the lynchpin for the other countries." Scandinavia perhaps even Moscow will want to become more involved. Most firms noted they are proceeding cautiously in Eastern Europe.

One president of a U.S. public relations firm noted that EC is directly responsible for public relations development in Europe. That public relations is 5 to 15 years behind the United States and European public relations is rapidly being pushed into more modern services.

II. Global Networking: Creating Opportunities with EC

The largest public relations firms have ownership of their world network. In one case, an American firm with other offices in both Canada and the U.S. are owned by the British (who are the leading investors in manufacturing in the U.S., too). Some of these large public relations firms are also members of networks of independently owned public relations firms. As stated by the President of a modest-sized firm: "if a (PR) firm is large enough" naturally they will expand their clientele. For another the 1992 EC meant more "aggressive European markets" and more opportunities for public relations.

For those firms who are more modest-sized and rely totally on networks through established relationships, the alternative is to link up with a network of public relations firms with often similar interests. Overall the interest in global network membership for public relations is identified for 17 firms.

Table VI
Membership in Global Communication Network
(Multiple Response Possible)

World Communication	5
Pinacle Group	3*
Local Media	0
The Public Relations Exchange Network	1
International Federal of Elite Triatheletes	1
International Public Relations Group of Companies	1
Other:	

Own Network	5
Owned by Foreign network	1
Keep business myself	1
Seeking network now (confidential who)	1
Affiliated with an EC PR firm but not network	2
Would like membership-not yet	1
No network	10**

*President of network included in interviews
**two responded with: "maybe on ad hoc basis", "like to hand-pick joint venture"

A few firms who are not into an established network are seeking relationships with 1 or more agencies who share similar business interests. This gives a more modest-sized public relations firms an opportunity to be involved in global business. Unless, as in one case, a firm is willing to be very aggressive in competing for business. In this instance the firm is willing to monitor and scan the environment for opportunities and does not want to give the business away to a network. In this instance, the firm's chief CEO says as a modest-sized firm it is not an advantage to belong to a network.

III. Who is in Charge of the International Accounts?

With the growth well documented, it is interesting to note what qualifications these CEO's are asking for. The general impression is that international public relations is viewed as complex and that most, if not all, hiring will be from within the company. The respondents were asked to list, specifically, in order of importance the qualifications required for hiring staff in theses international public relations positions. It is fair to note that 22 different variables were identified. The clustering of these characteristics deemed important are listed in the table below in terms of first, second, and third choices.

Table VII

Job Qualifications Ranked by Firms
International Public Relations Positions

	Business Experience	Good Communication
First	4 (MBA-2)(Internat)	4 (persuasion)
Second	3	2 (diplomat)
Third	7(econ)(one bus)	2
	(industrial specialist)	
	(personal finance)	
	(Bernays-economics)	

	Media Relations	International (Culture)
First	3 (Europe)	5 (indigenous)
Second	2 (Practical)	5
Third	2 (International)	4

Writing Skills	
First	3
Second	2
Third	1 (blend cultures)

Language	
First	1
Second	7(English)
Third	4(Fr)(if have something to say)

Own Account Experience	
First	0
Second	1
Third	0

Social Sc./Liberal Arts	
First	1
Second	1 (Bernays)
Third	0

Professional	
First	1
Second	0
Third	0

Public Relations-know PR	
	10 (public affairs)
	2
	0

Journalism	
	2
	2 (financial news)
	0

Academic Training	
	0
	0
	1

Thinking on your feet	
	1 (Bernays)
	2
	1

The top first-place qualification for being hired into an international position is knowledge of public relations. The suggestion is that not anyone can conduct public relations. The thrust may include a touch of international and intercultural expectations since the next highest first choice is someone with international relations or cultural background (5 mentions), particularly about the indigenous group being served.

The second choice qualification is language (French or English--especially if you have something to say with 7 mentions) with international relations and cultural understanding the next most needed skill (5 mentions). The third qualification is business experience with a variety of suggestions: personal finance, industrial specialist, or economics. Again following close behind business experience as the third qualification is international relations-intercultural understanding with 4 mentions and language with 4 mentions.

Overall, regardless of whether ranked first, second, or third, the qualifications having the most mentions are ranked as:

International relations-culture	14 mentions
Business Experience	14 mentions
Public Relations	12 mentions
Language	12 mentions
Good Communication	8 mentions
Media Relations	7 mentions
Writing Skills	6 mentions
Journalism	4 mentions

Thinking on your feet	4 mentions
Social Sc./Liberal Arts	2 mentions
Own Account Experience	1 mention
Professional	1 mention
Academic Training	1 mention

The first four qualifications mentioned ranked close together. International Relations, business experience, public relations and languages clustered closely together. This may have some suggestions for the public relations professional interested in an international career.

The next categories of qualifications group around a more skill oriented area--communication, both verbal and writing, and media relations. One respondent noted that in Europe the public relations professionals are trained generally and learn the craft on the job. In the United States the professional is trained in the craft and is retrained to "think" on-the-job. Hence, the mention of liberal arts and social science training as being preferred. The preference being to have people trained to "think" and learn the craft later. In one instance the President of the public relations firm strongly stated that writing skills were not his priority. He preferred people with good communication skills as in verbal communication. Someone who could get a message across interpersonally. He did not feel writing was the main channel or the most effective channel for communicating. Another respondent stressed the importance of persuasion and understanding the political climate.

To more specifically focus on the qualifications needed another question focused on the academic background of staff members being hired for international public relations. Here the responses varied more than expected. Several mentioned that speech communication or communication was not familiar to them or was a "mystery". In the telephone interviews followup questions clarified why this category was not marked as frequently. Many respondents simply have not heard of a discipline called communication.

A surprisingly high number of "other" responses focused on liberal arts. Now liberal arts is very close to what the communication discipline (organizational communication, interpersonal communication, public relations, public speaking, broadcasting, and speech) is about. In other words, there is a clear trend toward less journalism as a craft and to a more general curriculum. No one mentioned mass communication as an academic discipline preferred in hiring.

One firm mentioned that type of academic training had no bearing and preferred a person with language, overseas experience, and culture. A summary of the responses is outlined in the table below:

Table VIII

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND
(some multiple responses by respondents)

Did not answer:		8
Business	Mentions	8
	2nd place	2 (one stated marketing)

Grad	1	
MA Bus Comm	1	
Journalism Mentions	7	(expected)
1st	2	
MA	1	
No Journ	1	
Mass Communication	0	
Speech Communication	2	
Mystery/not familiar	2	
1st	1	

Other:

liberal arts (mention)	2
liberal arts (1st)	1
liberal arts/social sci	2
liberal arts/intern rela	1
liberal arts/econ MBA	1
ability to express ideas	1
need people who think	1
3rd articulate not bookworms, not heavy	
in writing--craft	1
political scienc	1
foreign language	1
3rd: basic building block skills	1
PR	1
PR (corporate commun)	1
PR or government	1
2nd political science	1
economics	1
money management	1
1st--international relati	1

General:

"no bearing--language, overseas experience and culture more important)

"can't be too thin, too beautiful, too smart"

The responses suggest that there is a trend toward a more liberal arts background and that might explain why journalism is mentioned little on the qualifications list and not the leading mention for the academic background. If the European approach is to "teach a person to think" and learn the craft on the job, then a journalism degree would not be a high priority in international public relations. Again, communication degrees (nonjournalism) grounded in the liberal arts tradition may have more appeal to those hiring for international public relations.

IV. Public Relations in Action

To further understand the nature of public relations in international public relations and in regard to EC 1992 in particular, the 31 firms were asked to list the type of services being offered. Often the "function" of public relations is hotly de-

bated and the nature of public relations should be revealed by the services rendered.

Several key phrases were mentioned in terms of services and included: counseling, strategic planning, marketing, research, campaign management, crisis communication, lobbying, promotions, media relations, publicity, information processing. In the history of the development of public relations, the model of public relations have evolved from propaganda, to information processing, to persuasion, and now more recently proposed area of understanding (two-way symmetric). The responses from the firms seem to fit the latter three models with promotions and publicity being mentioned most frequently.

The niches of professional expertise were specifically identified. These firms were strengthening their abilities and building on what they had done in networking. This was the key strategy for expanding the public relations effort. Another approach to EC related to the clients. If a client was affected, the public relations firm became involved especially if a firm did not identify international relations as a growth area (primarily the medium-sized public relations firms).

These areas covered a number of areas. The most frequently mentioned opportunity was high tech which had a global tradition. Financial services was mentioned with specific references to the U.S. considering European stock exchange, personal investments, and more business for U.S. brokerage firms and mutual funds. Some companies stated they were moving away from high tech. The software industry, promotional athletics, manufacturing, retail, heavy industry, entrepreneurial ventures, environmental interests and policies, crisis communication, employee relations, international health care, and transnational communication and counseling services offered on monitoring EC were specifically identified. One firm summarized they selected their affiliates in the areas of food, pharmacy, and technology, areas of mutual strength. Whatever is decided the Boston Globe in an article on "U.S. Companies in '92" stated "they will have to make sure they have a clear market niche."

The mention of information services had another dimension. A firm would develop a package explaining EC but at the same time be marketing their services and expertise. Some of the informational packages focused on the strategies resulting from EC in Europe. For example, a factory could be more diverse in production. EC had made it possible for goods to flow and a shoe factory in every country was no longer necessary. These changing strategies would be identified by a public relations firm and presented to their clients.

Summary

The firms' statements best summarize the variety of concerns about EC 1992. Although many U.S. firms see Europe as an opportunity "if one is not already there, Europe may be harder to crack--not easier."

There will be "a lot more closer relationship with Scandinavia, east block then past." One CEO mentioned there may be "too much expectation....not have the growth expecting". Al-

though another CEO stated "there are more people in Europe than the U.S."

Although EC 1992 is on the clients' mind--its important but they're not sure what to do with the opportunity". A CEO from the Washington D.C. area felt there is a "dirth of information -- feeling the U.S. American business people have not time or are insensitive until EC 1992 affects them." Most of the strategies center around branding local operations--that it is "best to leave the local brand name and local management" as more firms are bought for the public relations networks (whether in the U.S. or in Europe).

But most of all "there is more than an opportunity--its going to be a different world. There will be discontinuity in the way things are done. Information technology will streamline." Another CEO summed up by stating: international, multicultural, and national corporations will push public relations agencies to develop. A Time subhead stated "public relations firms expand abroad as clients seek worldwide service." U.S. public relations firms will "spearhead public relations in Europe".

Perhaps the most far reaching statements was shared by Ed Bernays who strongly emphasized that firms "must focus on advising issues." Firms now are "tied down in the use of PR tools (releases, etc)." "ATTITUDES are going to be the major issue to address".

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SURVEY ON U.S. PR IN EUROPE'S 1992

1. What is your view of European Economic Consolidation in 1992 as a business opportunity for your agency?

_____

_____

_____

2. What plans does your agency have to prepare for the planned consolidation of Europe in 1992? (Check all that apply.)

_____ No plans
_____ Open an agency in Europe
_____ Other (explain) _____
_____ Respond with additional staff in present offices
_____ Join an international public relations network

3. If your agency does not have plans to address 1992, please indicate your reasoning.

_____

_____

_____

4. If your agency intends to respond to 1992 with additional or reassigned staff in your established office(s), please indicate the number of staff at each location.

Location _____ New Staff _____ Reassigned Staff _____
Location _____ New Staff _____ Reassigned Staff _____

In which cities will your agency open new offices?

Location _____ New Staff _____ Reassigned Staff _____
Location _____ New Staff _____ Reassigned Staff _____

5. Specifically list, in order of importance (first is most important), the qualifications you are requiring for hiring new staff. (e.g., fluent in foreign language(s); local European citizen; special industry knowledge such as high tech)

First _____
Second _____
Third _____

6. From what academic background, if any, do you expect these new staff members to come?

_____ Business
_____ Journalism
_____ Other (explain) _____
_____ Mass Communication
_____ Speech Communication or Communications

7. If your agency is a member of -- or intends to join -- a global communications network, please identify the group by responding as member or newly affiliating. (Write M for member or A for newly affiliating.)

_____ WorldComm
_____ Pinnacle Group
_____ Local Media
_____ Other (please specify) _____
_____ The Public Relations Exchange Network
_____ International Public Relations Group of Companies
_____ Pioneer Group

8. What types of services do you expect to offer to capitalize on 1992?

_____

_____

9. Additional comments about 1992?

_____

_____

Your Name _____
Your Title _____
Your Agency _____
Your Telephone Number _____